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Monuments of Literature, Scraps of Criticism

Abtract: The study traces the emergence and evolution of the "text analysis," a genre of linguistic-literary research that no (postwar) history of Romanian linguistics or literary criticism registers as such, although it led to a rich production of studies at the juncture of the two domains. The investigation assumes two basic goals: on the one hand, to explain the reasons why Romanian linguistic research during communism developed in dominantly analytical form and with main focus upon fiction; on the other hand, to assess the relation of this trend with arch-ideas of the entire literary-critical field of the age (like "literary singularity," "aesthetic autonomy," "the great writer" etc.).
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The landscape of Romanian literary studies during communism displays a large, albeit desert-like, territory colonised by linguistics, which is not only unregistered as such in any literary-critical panorama, but seems to contradict the long-established depiction of this domain as the exclusive fief of impressionism. Alongside the journal review, the critical essay or the monograph – the ruling critical genres between 1964-1989 – the "text analysis" ushered by linguistics seems to feature even less than a poor relative. Its ghost is now forgotten in library deposits or on older-generation school teachers' shelves. How did this lackluster "uncritical" genre come to life and what made postwar Romanian linguistics so prone to focusing on the literary text?

The 1948 education reform saw linguistics established as a key discipline within the communist cultural policy of improving mass literacy. Although its initial orientation was accordingly purely technical and practical, Romanian linguistics started, already around 1953, to gradually build a strong interest for the literary text. A main stimulus in this respect came from the Soviet-inspired subdomain of history of literary language, meant to explore the community linguistic standard. But despite his "popular" and egalitarian discourse, the communist regime

authorised "the imposition of a norm derived from the cult language, not from the popular language (…), whom it only rhetorically identified with."[1] As a consequence of that, the topic of linguistic norm opens the question of writers' contribution to its formation. This is a largely legitimate point in the Romanian case: although the 19th century establishment of the norm was not officially recorded in any reference scientific treatise, its process could be re-composed from the great "classic" writers' works of the given age. This explains why fiction quickly became the privileged field of research for history of literary language studies which flourished from the second half of the 1950s.[2] The notion of "literary language," initially having a larger community signification, is explicitly associated, a decade later, with "the writer's language," not "the people's language."[3] Although after the 19th century, writers would influence linguistic norms only to a small extent, their contribution still remains overrated by academic research: "Writers are the most efficient and skillful agents of improvement and standardisation of the literary language. They lead and influence all areas of culture. (…). Literary works can even serve as models for press, education, scientists."[4]

A similar path is followed by linguistic stylistics. In its initial agenda set after 1948, this subdomain of linguistics was meant to study "the entire speaking community's means of expression," with "no particular interest for artistic effects."[5] However, around the middle of the 1950s, it had already become clear that even professional linguists find literary styles the most approachable of all. Given the relentless expansion of dogmatic language, other "functional styles" become difficult to deal with and, ultimately, pointless to investigate. The existence of what we now call "journalistic style," for instance, is controversial during communism, since "to analyse the press would automatically mean to analyse political language."[6] Therefore, stylistic research also focuses on literary language, while studies concerning other functional styles remain "infinitely scarcer"[7] or, at least, in obvious "disproportion."[8]

Stylistics and the history of literary language become the most prolific fields of Romanian linguistics around 1960, producing a large array of "text analyses." The trend does not fuel a public debate about the methods of literary criticism – which was still ruled by the socialist realism tenets –, but already counts growing numbers of academics, young researchers, students. For linguists, literary texts are convenient objects of research, as they entail less ideological risks than other types of social discourse; for literates, linguistic instruments of analysis are attractive, because they offer the alternative to official content-oriented militant criticism. A telling result of this juncture is the academic Bucharest Circle of Poetics and Stylistics (1961-1965), which brings together young critics (Virgil Nemoianu, Mihai Zamfir), linguists (Toma Pavel, Sanda Golopenția, Alexandra Roceric, Mihaela Mancaș, Liliana Ionescu), along with ethnologists (Mihai Pop, Constantin Eretescu, Pavel Ruxandoiu).

The first issue of *Cahiers de linguistique théorique et apliquée*[9] already publishes four linguistic studies of literary texts, about to become exemplary in this respect: Roman Jakobson and Boris Cazacu, "Analyse du poème *Revedere*," Mihaela Mancaș, "La synesthésie dans la création artistique de

M. Eminescu, T. Arghezi et M. Sadovea-nu," Mihail Nasta, "Considérations sur le caractèrs distinctifs du mètre grec," Toma Pavel, "Notes pour une description structurale de la métaphore poétique." Considering that fact that all are applied exercises and avoid compact theory, we can still see this issue of *Cahiers* as a theoretical manifesto, whose program is comparable (even though not equivalent) to the famous structuralist issue of the French journal *Communications* (1966). Indeed, young linguist Toma Pavel's paper is a coherently structuralist text analysis that drafts a theoretical hypothesis expected to be generally valid for the "poetic language." Pavel quotes Hjelmslev's *Prolegomena*, Trubetzkoy's *Principles of Phonology*, as well as Em. Vasiliu's 1960's study about "The Neutralization of Phonematic Oppositions," in order to describe the general linguistic mechanism of metaphor as "suspension of the possibility to commute invariants." He then proceeds to applying this abstract scheme to particular poetic examples poetic chosen from Eminescu, Arghezi, Beniuc, Baudelaire and Apollinaire.

One might, of course, object the previous case is not representative for the still highly ideologised cultural moment around 1960, and neither is it for the future evolution of postwar Romanian criticism. But even if linguistic text analyses were indeed restricted to certain publishing channels and specialized categories of public, they would nonetheless amount to great productivity in the following decades. Most academic linguistic journals (such as *Limbă și literatură, Studii și cercetări de lingvistică, Limba română, Cahiers roumains de linguistique théorique et apliquée, Revue roumaine de linguistique, Cahiers de linguistique*) include separate columns of literary text analyses; several studies about Romanian writers' "language and style," several individual or collective volumes of "literary and stylistic analyses" are published during the 1960s, 70s and 80s. Some of the most prolific text analysts are stylisticians Gh. Bulgăr, Ștefan Munteanu and G.I. Tohăneanu, who author altogether hundreds of contributions.[10] But also linguists like Boris Cazacu, Ion Coteanu, Paula Diaconescu tend to specialize in literary text analyses and frequently provide practical examples in this respect.[11] Besides academic journals, linguistic text analyses are hosted by literary periodicals (many of them from the province), where they stand, in a bizzarre discrepancy, along traditionally impressionist book reviews: *Ateneu, Luceafărul, Steaua, Argeș, Viața Româneas-că, Cronica, Convorbiri literare* and – to the greatest extent of all – in the Timisoara journal *Orizont*.

What was the actual impact of the research trend whose institutional paths we described above? The eve of cultural liberalization around 1960-1963 already suggests a range of options for intellectual validation in the literary field, led by the distinct alternative of literary press, respectively academic research. Although it had already been developing through the terminal stage of socialist realism, linguistic stylistics didn't quite exist for the neo-impressionist criticism that was emerging in the same years. Nicolae Manolescu labels "the new stylistics" "a pure naivety" and thinks it pointless to "quantify vowels," through "intricate mathematical and grammatical procedures," only to discover what our senses "tell us instantly," namely the fact that fiction has a "quasi-irreducible

kernel laying beneath any mechanisms of language."[12] Eugen Simion wonders likewise what's the use to "strip literature bare, as if dissecting a dead body (...) A list of words tells us nothing about the truth that lies inside" the literary work, an "ineffable product, whose charm cannot be proven in an objective manner."[13] Overall, the basic objection formulated in the very few critical debates about linguistic stylistics regards their excessively "descriptive" character and lack of "creativity": "Such waste of time to be informed, under the title of utter novelties, of what we had long known about the analyzed texts."[14]

The two approaches carve up their own domains within Romanian literary studies of the 1960s. Neoimpressionism is the obvious and adequate companion of contemporary literary life whom it actively supports, values and canonizes in the rhythm of periodical book reviews. Neoimpressionist critics also dwelve into (especially inter-war) literary history, but even so they keep implicit emphasis upon the problems of contemporary fiction and its continuity with literary tradition, across the realist-socialist gap. Stylistics and structuralism, on the other hand, are more directly useful in the university, then school teaching of literary history and especially of its parts the mainstream criticism cannot yet cover. From the very beginning of the 1960s, history of literary language studies are the first to gradually exempt 19th century writers (the "makers" of literary language) from ideologized codes of interpretation: once analyzed in terms of linguistic innovation and relations to grammatical norms, older literary texts are cautioned against determinist contextual readings. Official cultural policies, formerly at war with "formalism,"

now tacitly embrace linguistic methods, as the gradual departure from socialist realism and the subsequent condemnation of "sociologism" leaves a great blank space in terms of a(nother) politically correct method of literary research. Impressionist criticism of the 1960s and linguistic stylistics remain completely divergent in what concerns their public, institutional settings and even objects of study. The classic distribution of academics and literary journalists would keep on sinking in the years to come. However, despite using different, sometimes opposite types of approaches, they share a common interest for bracketing ideological, sociological, contextual considerations from the study of literature.

The greatest impact of linguistic stylistics is thus didactic and slightest – critical. Text analyses provide university, then school students with a non-dogmatic vernacular the system itself allows, but also with the opportunity to receive (if not quite enjoy!) an intensive literary-linguistic education. This goal is significantly reached in Sorin Alexandrescu and Ion Rotaru's 1967 *Literary and Stylistic Analyses,*[15] whose "commentaries" would be frequently referenced in the school teaching of Romanian literature. The preface addresses "the confusion of values" caused by the "too strong emphasis on literary works' content of ideas" in "school, literary journals and universities," which had the result of bringing to the forefront "proletarian poets" at the expense of writers clearly "superior" to them. Against the officially condemned method of literary sociologism, the authors plead for a form-oriented literary approach led by the "primacy of text," which they support with Russian Formalism and New Criticism references. The volume selects a

range of writers exponential for university and school curricula,[16] however, text analyses here illustrated eventually serve better aesthetizing writers (like Macedonski, Barbu, Blaga, Arghezi, Mateiu Caragiale) who suffered the most during socialist realism censorship.

Ion Rotaru and Sorin Alexandrescu are nevertheless extremely unlike one another. The former resorts to a more traditional *explication de texte*, focused on "the main characteristic of the work" and some of its stylistic, grammatical or versification proofs. The latter drafts a very systematic plan of analysis, meant to trace the same "artistic structure" along five succesive "layers": phonetic, grammatical, lexical and semantic, of "the system of images" (including narrative or descriptive devices and types of characters), and ultimately the layer of "the writer's conception." Much indebted to well-kown theories of Jakobson and Wellek, this analytical plan is meant to reconcile formal and content-oriented approaches. However, both the order of layers and the extent of attention they get make obvious Alexandrescu's interest in formalism; he almost never gets to touch upon the last layer, and disscuss accordingly matters concerning "social criticism" or "the work's relation with reality."

As pointed out, Rotaru and Alexandrescu resemble the comedy movies' *odd couple*. One works with sophisticated linguistic concepts and scholasticly cuts the text in formal layers. The other merely manages to fill 2-3 pages once he found (or borrowed from previous criticism) the "main idea" of the text or its dominant, sometimes cliché stylistic feature ("orality," "conciseness," "lexical richness" etc.). It remains hard to infer either a career move

(from Alexandrescu) or an attempt to keep up with trends (from Rotaru) in their unlikley association; as a product of the "healthy origin" policy of the communist regime, Rotaru is better placed within the academic establishment, but is also oportunistically keen on following the lead of academic trends. In any case, the traditional exegete learns from the modern stylistician that the "content" of literary works is no longer fashionable for the new research. Rotaru would turn the *Literary and Stylistic Analyses* in a succesful school franchise, publishing, after Alexandrescu's departure from the country, four other reissues of the 1967 volume, in 1972, 1974, 1979 and 1987 respectively. Alexandrescu's previous analyses are, of course, cut out from the new reissues. Even so, Rotaru has obviously learnt some tricks from his younger collaborator. One is his newly-asserted idea that "technical-scientific" and "humanistic" disciplines, namely linguistics and literature, should be fused in education and teaching. In Rotaru's view, Romanian language and literature should both be taught in a "practical" manner, by leaving out most "theoretical considerations" (where he lists historical, sociological, biographical, bibliographical and critical information). As such, it would mostly profit from analyses strictly focused on the text. His new references in this respect are "older treaties of poetics" and "structuralism."[17] Although he never really keeps up with Alexandrescu's former analyses – which would, however, remain influential for school teachers – Rotaru has clearly upgraded his analytic framework: not only are his new poetic analyses now full of tables, diagrams, statistics and prosody observations, but the author is generally less concerned with the

"main idea" of the text than with its style, language and even grammar.[18]

The model of text analyses illustrated by both Alexandrescu and Rotaru in their volume(s) proves this approach rarely crosses linguistic confines of the text in order to trace larger, more general categories of literature. Although they work with certain structuralist tools, the analysts don't share structuralism's drive for the impersonal system of literature, but a more traditional care for the literary works's irreducible uniqueness. Alexandrescu views the text as a "singular architecture," with "a unique shape" that reflects the mind and soul of the individual architect. His analytical scope is somehow limited by the interpreter's insistence upon the self-contained symmetry of the text whose every layer presumably reflects the same "structure." This assumption of perfect correspondence sometimes forces the reader to paraphrase his own critical observations from one layer to another. Often, the "structure" is nothing more than the "theme" suggested by traditional exegesis or an ad-hoc outline of the given text (such as "the death-life opposition" or "the dialogue between poet and the river"). The standard theme of the text is nevertheless framed by a sophisticated, albeit tautological at times, analysis, with layers over layers of an extremely close reading.

But all deficiencies of the method, its relative naivety and lack of critical novelty matter less than its empiric and symbolic benefits. The layered text analysis illustrated in the 1967 volume disscussed above has a great didactic adaptability and will be soon adopted in schools, whose programs start from 1966-1967 to abandon the previous focus on the "ideological content" of fiction. The Communist Party 1968 directives upon education reinforce the necessity of humanistic teaching to shift from "description to explanation" and refute "the excess of literary history"[19] displayed during the forced ideologization. In school lessons of language and literature, text analyses sucessfully replace history (or ideological sociology) of literature. This analytical scenario, adapted after structuralism, but still faithful to certain elements of traditional exegesis, can support students' "aesthetic education" and their unhindered contact with literature. It is, after all, a medium-level analytic scenario: one does not need great critical qualities – "calling or "talent" – to be able to distinguish within the text different layers of form, from sound and grammar. The communist regime broadened the instructional foundation and aimed at shaping regular, standardised citizens: as such, it would never allow in teaching anything ressembling today's interactive, creative strategies. Given these circumstances restrictive for the personality of the students, a text-centric teaching of language and literature was the smallest evil school could offer them; and, initially at least, the best thing for their "aesthetic" education.

Interestingly enough, text analyses become the focus of teaching both Romanian language and literature. "Stylistics" – is argued in a didactic handbook – "should be incorporated in the teaching of grammar and literature (...). Every chapter of grammar needs to be followed by a list of the given category's stylistic functions, starting with phonetics," as the ability to work on literary texts "improves the students' speaking and communication skills."[20] Corpora of grammatical analyses indeed gather

their examples mostly from literary texts.[21] Influential linguists like Ion Coteanu or Boris Cazacu argue[22] for "the deliberate rapprochement of methods of study language and literature." Coteanu's own seminar of Contemporary Romanian Language is taught exclusively on fiction texts, with the view to "assess linguistic skills through literature, and leave aside all historical or critical considerations."[23] But the academic linguist also encourages school teachers to introduce literary texts in their Romanian language lessons. Boris Cazacu is likewise eager to point out that "linguistic analysis of texts fully meets the instructive requirements of education," is "preliminary to the analysis of contents and supersedes bio-bibliographical research."[24] Cazacu famously co-authored with Roman Jakobson a 1962 analysis of Eminescu's "Revedere" and would follow that prestigious model on his own with several text analyses (especially of poetry) similarly focused on grammatical and syntactic parallelisms. A younger-generation linguist like Rodica Zafiu, who studied Philology from 1977 to 1981, is right to express a certain feeling of being fed up with literature:

> All my generation peers grew with a double-fold sensibility. Literates (…) were well-trained from faculty in linguistics, while linguists were very open towards literature (…). There was even a point when we [linguists] grew tired of literature. So much poetry did we analyse until the last detail that we felt the need to turn towards non-fictional texts.[25]

Helped by its successful didactic implementation, linguistic text analysis became an inflationary genre in the 1970s, comparable, in its sheer amount, to the more prestigious critical essay. Volumes or journals comprising text analyses now lay useless in library or personal archives nobody still dwelves into. The trend of text analyses inspired a bland and shapeless production which seemed to snowball rather than be triggered by an authentic drive to innovation in research. As a matter of fact, many of these studies still mix up, in unpalatable combinations, traditional, even obsolete ideas about literature (like those regarding writers' "genius" or the "ineffable" nature of poetry), with specialized linguistic concepts which often seem indistinctly shot at (any) texts. We can observe such a hybrid in a 1970 volume of *Syntactic and Stylistic Analyses*. It joins – although their approaches are divergent – the linguist Sorin Stati, who displays several formalized models of Romanian syntax, and stylistician Gh. Bulgăr, who tries to apply in fiction the given models. Their scientific mindsets are different, as the linguistic objectivism of the former doesn't quite add up to the latter's belief in "genius" writers. Nevertheless, both visions eventually clash in analyses whose ostensibly specialized concepts often cannot hide the meagreness of critical ideas: "This text analysis tried to highlight linguistic devices that support the text's content"[26], reads the unapotheotic conclusion of one study. The linguistic dialect might even work by itself, saying nothing whatsoever about the given text, as in the utterly super-realist observation that a poem sigend by Bacovia illustrates "the model of semantic homogenization and neutralization of oppositions depicted by a square"[27].

The theoretical strength of this trend is, in fact, in inverse ratio to its productivity

and influence as teaching doxa. In all cases of European formalism or structuralism, linguistics' influence in literary studies reshaped the latter's core assumptions about the functions of fiction and its overarching norms. Even the more text-oriented Russian Formalists did not conduct their studies other than by hinting at the more general rules of the literary system. The Romanian case, however, proves that isolated "text analyses" remain the single and satisfying aim both for linguistic and literary studies. Almost never do they generalize their scattered findings in encompassing theories about literature, or disscuss from the larger perspective of poetics. It would probably be unjust to ask linguists themselves to go deeper into literary theory; but neither are literates who embrace linguistic concepts ready to do more than count all adjectives of a text[28] or draw the scheme of character relations from a narrative.

Attempts to theorize, outside confined texts, upon the more general norms and functions of literature are scarce and mostly timid. Linguist Ion Coteanu, for instance, mentions "the specific grammar of poetic language," which he describes in Jakobson's terms of "ambiguity, concentration and double signification"; but stops at these general remarks, since his linguistic purposes of research don't necessarily entail the need to (re)build a theory of literature. His scientific interests and his corresponding goals to illustrate the mechanism of the general language are best served by the analysis of separate texts: even when referring to Jauss' theories of reception, Coteanu argues that text as a "structured unit" remains the stable point of "today's linguistics and criticism."[29]

D. Irimia also attempts to raise the ante when he argues that stylistics, traditionally focused on text and author, should upgrade to poetics and to the level of literary invariants:

> Stylistics must emancipate itself from the historical study of literary language and shift its interest towards the evolution of the aesthetic function. Poetic language (...) has its own distinct structure, transcending the particular manners in which every poet turns ordinary language in a new linguistic system.[30]

Irimia states the idea of "poetic language" as a distinct entity, but doesn't follow this hypothesis by further exploring its overarching "laws." Several of his studies reassert the "functional and semiotic" differences between "poetic language and popular language."[31] However, the author always opts for practical examples and analyses of literary style, instead of elaborating theoretically his premises. As stylistician, Irimia was an important contributor to Eminescu's monument in Romanian criticism: as such, his insights about the distinctiveness of poeticity often abridge to exploring the distinctiveness of Eminescu's poetry. The fact that the celebrated poet worked in an age when "Romanian literary language was essentially stabilized, but its norms were not yet rigid"[32] allows Irimia to investigate in close detail all verbal layers of Eminescu's innovations, from phonetics to syntax, but also to conclude that Eminescu's poetry becomes its own "autonomous entity."[33]

An extremely prolific stylistician, Ștefan Munteanu would have enough material grounds to build a "history of the artistic language," a notion he announces

as "overarching the individual artistic for-mulas."[34] In practice, however, he's rarely interested in binding his findings in a co-herent theory. Because he still nurtures the romantic belief in the literary work's singu-larity, "substance" and "intimate significa-tion," Munteanu usually explores, case after case, every "prestigious artist'" "linguistic innovation" and never really gets to connect "the threads from one period to another in the evolution of artistic language."[35] Even more timidly does Gh. Bulgăr express the very vague idea that "it wouldn't be wrong to consider that most literary contexts de-rive from a common stylistic structure."[36] Or G. Tohăneanu, when he observes, in an otherwise aptly conducted argument, that the differential nature of literarity is shown by the fact that "all compartments" of literary language mirror themselves in an effect of "synonimy beyond words."[37] But once again, traditional prejudices seem to undermine theoretical attempts, as the Timisoara stylistician is more eager to re-flect, in seemingly Crocean terms, upon "the very essence of Poetry,"[38] than to draft a theoretical scheme of its structure with the linguistic tools at his disposal. A younger-generation poetician like Crișu Dascălu was right to observe that "often studies meant to explore the general po-etic language eventually resort to separate commentaries on poetry, just like readings of poetry often amount to stray observa-tions about their language."[39]

We thus witness a certain disdain for theorizing even with linguists and stylis-ticians, so outside the traditionally unthe-oretical field of impressionist, journalistic criticism. On the other hand, we cannot but observe a striking coincidence of views between the two parties. The "distinct structure" of the literary language referred by linguists and stylisticians is, in fact, the same with the "aesthetic autonomy" pro-fessed by literary critics. The different for-mulas of their discourse – one pedantically "objective," the other charmingly "subjec-tive" –, as well as their different public im-pact, matter less in the long run than the shared conclusion they reach: all parties involved work towards affirming the force and intangible nature of literature.

We should therefore wonder what ac-tual consequences the linguistic input had in Romanian literary studies. In principle, Gérard Genette and Jonathan Culler agree that linguistics could influence literary re-search in two basic ways: on the one hand, through "direct application of techniques of linguistic description" in "analyzing the language"[40] of one or several texts; on the other hand, by resorting to an overall view of "literature, works, genres which, beyond superficial linguistic considerations, takes after structural models borrowed from modern linguistics."[41] While the first pro-cedure takes place at the level of text, the second has a more abstract line of argu-mentation, its aim being not to interprete given texts, but trace therein "the action of overarching literary conventions."[42] Toma Pavel makes a similar distinction when he notes that linguistics can be used "heuristi-cally," "in combination with other concep-tual instruments" (as is the case of stylistics, New Criticism, formalism), or "specula-tively," in support of "radical epistemologi-cal positions" (such as those formulated by French Theory about "the death of the au-thor" or "the end of man").[43] Opting for the second version, structuralist literary theo-rists are keen on separating the "science of literature," which deals with hypothetical

ensembles of texts, from literary criticism and history, which, regardless of their practical methods, work with particular or historically localized objects. This helps us conclude that the greatest innovation linguistics could trigger in literary studies is more than to refine local techniques of analysis; instead, linguistics could enable the formulation of more general hypotheses about the existence and functioning of literary artifacts.

The concept of literature as regulated system of intrinsic norms, authorized by the model of Saussurean linguistics, enabled the questioning of long-held assumptions about literature's historicity, signification or aesthetic value. But even if such epistemological implications were directly inspired by linguistics, they could nonetheless be reached only in a multidisciplinary theoretical frame, which would also summon sociology, philosophy or antropology. Evidently, Romanian academic research could not enjoy during communism such a wiggle room. Here, social sciences remain under strict allegiance to marxism-leninism, their scientific development thus arrested. Besides avoiding them, linguistics also avoids the area of everyday speech and its many ideological traps. In consequence, it selects fiction as a convenient object of research. Romanian linguistics' flow into literary studies is, therefore, triggered by speculative pitches rather than by a conscious need to reform literary research. Linguists find in fiction the opportunity to avoid the more dogmatic "realist" discourse, whereas literates find in linguistics an equally convenient dialect, seemingly "scientific," neutral, apolitical. This is a circumstantial (not revolutionary) fusion of disciplines, in reaction to

a common ideological enemy. All states of the former Soviet bloc witnessed a postwar renaissance of formalism, and saw academic literary studies follow the lead of linguistics, a key discipline within communist cultural policies and somehow less ravaged by ideological stakes that reshaped other social sciences.

Compared to sociology or philosophy, linguistics seemed, indeed, the most progressive discipline of Romanian research during communism, with its up-to-date theoretical framework and its scientific dialect miles apart from the marxist "science." Saussure, Jakobson or Hjelmslev were ground sources of postwar Romanian linguistics, just like they were for postwar French Theory. But on the two sides of the continent, similar theoretical ideas developed in different scenarios, according to the ideological-institutional contexts informing them. French theorists used the concepts of linguistics to radically reshape the objects and goals of all social sciences. Romanian "formalists" only applied those concepts in the analysis of literary texts, so their scope and problematics were bent on remaining thin. This explains why linguistics could not overturn Romanian literary studies' long-yielding assumptions about literary "greatness," but rather helped reassert them.

Stylistics, poetics, history of literary language became the most populated areas of postwar Romanian linguistics,[44] which seemed itself to bend down to literature (not the other way around). This would once again reaffirm the centrality of literature in the thread of postwar Romanian culture. Linguistic text analyses did not demolish critical prejudices, but almost romantically upped the prestige of literature.

The many cold linguistic concepts could not, in fact, hide that analysts themselves seemed enamored with the text, whose "high artistic peaks" or "indelible charm" they invariably glorified. Contrary to the French case, Romanian linguistics exerted a conservative function in literary studies. Under a thick curtain of terms with scientific resonance, text analyses only mimicked traditional critical ideas about Romanian canonical writers and their already canonized works.

It is understandable then why local literary criticism never seemed to give this academic trend second thoughts, after initially expressing its discontent during the 1960s. What about students who grew in the linguistic Zeitgeist of the 1970s and 80s, what did they learn from text analyses practiced in schools and universities? Presumably, they learned to make countless lists of literary devices according to standardized analytical models, which made their life as teachers even worse after the didactic reforms at the end of the 1990s. But, even more impactful for our collective mind, they implicitly learned that works written by Eminescu, Bacovia, Rebreanu, Sadoveanu, Arghezi, Creangă, Alecsandri, Topârceanu, Blaga, Goga, Coșbuc and so on were, so to speak, inexhaustible – therefore monumental.

Notes

1. Rodica Zafiu, "Din istoria cultivării limbii" ["From the History of Language Cultivation"], *România literară*, no. 47, 2009.

2. See Al. Rosetti, Boris Cazacu (eds.), *Istoria limbii române literare. Vol. 1: De la origini până la începutul secolului al XIX-lea*, [*A History of Romanian Literary Language. Vol 1: From Origins until the 19th century*], Bucharest, Editura Științifică, 1961.

3. Al. Bojin, *Studii de stil și limbă literară*, [*Studies on Literary Language and Style*], Bucharest, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 1968, p. 194.

4. Gheorghe Bulgăr, *Studii de stilistică și limbă literară* [*Studies of Stylistics and Literary Language*], Bucharest, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 1971, p. 9, 20.

5. Iorgu Iordan, *Stilistica limbii române* [*Stylistics of Romanian Language*], Bucharest, Institutul de Lingvistică Română, 1944, p. 12.

6. Rodica Zafiu, *Limbaj și politică* [*Language and Politics*], Bucharest, Editura Universității din București, 2007.

7. Valeria Guțu-Romalo, "Perioada 1944-1970" ["The period 1944-1970"], in Mioara Avram (ed.), *Istoria lingvisticii românești* [*The History of Romanian Linguistics*], Bucharest, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1978, p. 142.

8. Iorgu Iordan, *Stilistica limbii române* [*Stylistics of Romanian Language*], Bucharest, Editura Științifică, 1975, p. 6.

9. *Cahiers de linguistique théorique et apliquée*, no. 1, 1962.

10. See Olimpia Berca, Livius Bercea, *Bibliografia stilisticii românești* [*Bibliography of Romanian Stylistics*], Universitatea din Timișoara, Centrul de științe sociale, 1986.

11. Paula Diaconescu, "Concepte moderne în analiza limbii. Implicațiile lor în analiza textului literar" ["Modern Concepts in the Analysis of Language. Implications for the Analysis of Literary Text"], *Limbă și literatură*, 1974, no. 4, pp. 639-648.

12. Nicolae Manolescu, "Însemnări despre critică" ["Notes on Criticism"], *Contemporanul*, 31 Jul. 1964, p. 3.

13. Eugen Simion, "Două cuvinte despre stil și stilistică" ["Two Words about Style and Stylistics"], *România literară*, II, 13, 1969, p. 5.

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